

## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

### Laws of Minnesota 2012 Accomplishment Plan

**Date: October 24, 2011**

**Program Title: Green Corridor Legacy Program Phase IV**

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**Applicant Organization:** Redwood Area Development Corporation (RADC)

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**City** Redwood Falls **State** MN **Zip:** 56283

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**Organization Web Site:** www.tatankabluffs.com

**Funds Recommended: \$1,730,000**

**Legislative Citation: ML 2012, Ch. X, Art. X, Sec. X, Subd. 2 (g):** *(to be completed when signed by Governor)*

#### **Abstract:**

This program proposal will help create a legacy of habitat connectivity, public access, and economic vitality based on increased outdoor recreational opportunities in the mid-Minnesota River Watershed.

#### **Program Narrative**

The Green Corridor Legacy Program – Phase IV would be a continuation of previous Lessard-Sam’s Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) appropriations from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF). This regional initiative focuses on the concept of protection and restoration of high quality fish, game, and wildlife habitats using best practices and will target unique landscapes along the mid-Minnesota River watershed that have historical value to fish and game by helping to create new and/or expansions of Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and/or Aquatic Management Areas (AMA) complexes or “corridors”. This program proposal is in alignment with the DNR Region 4 Focus Area priorities.

#### **Design and Scope of Work**

The Glacial River Warren created the Minnesota River Valley as it drained Lake Agassiz 10,000+ years ago. The bluff to bluff wall of water carved out one of Minnesota’s most scenic landscapes, creating unique geological features, and unique plant communities along the valley and its primary tributaries.

This program incorporates the basic concepts of sustainability and ecosystem management. Minnesota has lost 99% of the original prairie and has seen dramatic declines in grassland dependent wildlife. Examples of the species showing the greatest conservation need in the Program area; the American

Badger, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Bobolink to name just a few. Traditional game species are also affected by the decline in habitat such as pheasants, deer, wild turkey, and a variety of dabbling ducks which are associated to prairie wetland complexes.

Efforts to restore, protect, and enhance our wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife are timely as escalating development pressures threaten remaining natural lands and water resources on both public and private lands. The Green Corridor Legacy Program approach will be based on sound science concepts of plan development, setting conservation priorities, developing short and long term strategies to achieve conservation priorities, implement the strategies, and then continue monitoring the outcomes. All of these concepts and practices will follow existing state wildlife and conservation plans and natural resource management practices in conjunction with agency partners.

Publicly owned natural resource infrastructures (WMA, AMA, SNA, parks/trails, waterways) invigorates local and regional economies by providing outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities supported by hunting, fishing, wildlife observation areas, and other forms of outdoor recreation. New business concepts are likely to arise as a direct result of the recreational and tourism opportunities that will be advanced by this Green Corridor Legacy Program. Because of this concept there is wide support from many stakeholders who will assist the Program activities to achieve the desired outcomes.

The proposed fee title acquisitions will be considered from a priority list of properties based on several key factors of which show the most urgent need and/or opportunities from willing and supportive landowners. All selected projects will have the support and cooperation of the DNR for acceptance into the WMA/AMA inventory system. All proposed projects will provide county notifications and will seek their approval.

The primary work area of the Green Corridor Legacy Program will be Redwood, Renville, Yellow Medicine, Chippewa, Brown, Nicollet, Murray, Lyon, and Cottonwood Counties with an emphasis along the Minnesota River, its tributaries, associated watersheds, and creating/expanding corridor or complexes of habitat. Connecting existing fragments of habitat along and near the Minnesota River and tributaries in the Program area will generate an ecological synergism that will allow game, wildlife, and aquatic species to flourish, while creating multiple outdoor recreational opportunities and improving public access through a series (phases) of funded activities within the nine (9) county Program area.

This Program is directly consistent with the uses of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as specified in Article XI of the Minnesota Constitution and Minnesota Statute 97A.056: to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife. Furthermore, it will produce multiple conservation benefits across a large targeted and planned geographic area.

## **Planning**

The Green Corridor Legacy Program in consultation with area DNR managers will ensure program activities conform to the various state conservation and resources plan objectives and outcomes. This program also conforms to the FY13 Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) eleven (11) proposal requirements and the statewide priority criteria for the Prairie Section and Outcomes specifically towards the Minnesota River, associated tributaries, and watersheds.

Some of those state and/or regional plans are:

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25- Year Framework: Minnesota's conservation estate, historic conservation investments and future opportunities dated December 15, 2010.

Conservation in the Middle Minnesota Valley: A Blueprint and Action Plan This was a LCCMR funded conservation plan awarded to the Green Corridor Initiative and specific to the mid - section of the Minnesota River Valley.

Native Plant Communities and Rare Species of The Minnesota River Valley Counties This document was created by DNR Ecological Resources and will be another document used to evaluate and/or prioritize potential acquisition for consideration. This document is in conjunction with the Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS).

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan 2010 This plan is a 25 year strategy for accelerating conservation due to loss/degradation of prairies, grasslands, wetlands, and associated habitat along with the fish and wildlife populations dependent upon them.

Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan identifies habitat loss and degradation as the number one driver of change for wildlife in Minnesota and further states that the prairie regions have experienced the greatest amount of habitat loss of any region.

Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for species in greatest conservation need has identified significant loss and degradation of habitat as the number one management challenge and one of the primary strategies is to provide protection through selective acquisition of key habitats in the prairie regions.

Minnesota's Long Range Duck Recovery Plan lists the objective of restoring a breeding population of one (1) million ducks by 2056. The primary strategy to reach this objective is the protection and restoration of two (2) million acres of habitat of which 70% will be grassland habitat in the prairie eco-region.

Minnesota's Long Range Plan for the Ring-neck Pheasant lists the objective of increasing pheasant populations to 1.8 million birds. Numerous strategies were identified to accomplish this objective; one of which calls for an additional 74,000 acres of grasslands to be protected through acquisitions of WMA's in the primary pheasant range.

Citizens report Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition – The Next 50 Years recommends acquisition goals of an additional 494,000 in the prairie and transitional region over the next 50 years.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) model outlines several key elements; Planning, implementation, and evaluation which the Green Corridor Legacy Program has been using as a basis for program development. The Green Corridor Legacy Program will continue to use existing state-wide wildlife conservation and strategic plans in partnership with our local and regional natural resource managers and conservation professionals to best achieve desired outcomes. These plans were developed through the most currently available science and the professional expertise of a broad range of wildlife professionals. These plans, along with use of GIS technology, will be used to identify potential projects based on existing and potential habitat resources in the program area. This will allow for selection of acquisition tracts that maximize population responses for both aquatic and game/nongame wildlife.

Finally, this Green Corridor Legacy Program proposal will address many of the visions and priority action items established by the LSOHC for the Prairie Section. The continued emphasis will be on the Minnesota River, associated tributaries, and watersheds within the program area and will protect and restore these unique landscapes that have historical value to fish, game, and wildlife

## Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds

The Green Corridor Legacy Program focuses on preserving and restoring natural resources infrastructures while emphasizing habitat connectivity (corridors), viability, and public access to these habitats. Besides funding requests to the Environmental & Natural Resource Trust Fund (ENRTF) by Green Corridor Legacy Program; several SWCD's in the Green Corridor Program area are planning future Clean Water Legacy Fund program proposals. The Green Corridor Legacy Program will assist when asked with submissions to the Outdoor Heritage Fund – Conservation Legacy Program (small grants) from our conservation and wildlife group partners like the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, and Pheasants Forever. Many other regional initiatives are currently being planned that are in line with Parks & Trails and Arts & Cultural Legacy Funds funding strategies.

## Relationship to Current Organizational Budget

This program proposal will supplement other traditional forms of funding (past, current, and future) that the Green Corridor Legacy Program has received such as the Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund and/or our pending federal North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant.

Source of Funding	Amount	Status
ENRTF FY2008	\$1,000,000	Completed 2010
OHF FY2010	\$1,617,000	Final Report Submitted
OHF FY2011	\$1,651,000	Final Report Submitted
OHF FY2012	\$1,771,000	Funding started 7/20/11
ENRTF FY2012	\$2,000,000	Funding started 7/20/11
NAWCA	\$650,000	Pending federal approval

## Sustainability and Maintenance

First, initial site restoration (bare ground with native vegetation) and development (signage, parking lots, fencing) will be accomplished by this appropriation. The DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife will manage these properties into perpetuity. Routine maintenance will be managed and determined by area DNR staff funded by their traditional sources like the Game & Fish Fund. Periodic enhancements or improvements will be funded by special funding requests. The DNR requires management or stewardship plans for each project which identify periodic inspections and continuing management of the property site. These management practices include such things as; prescribed fire, weed control, and invasive tree removal as needed or required and are usually spelled out in the Initial Development Plan (IDP) for each parcel. Regional partners/stakeholders in conjunction with the Green Corridor Legacy Program will also support these management activities/practices by applying for state funding/grants for on-going maintenance as needed.

## Outcomes

The Green Corridor Legacy Program Phase IV is a continuation and expansion of previous OHF appropriations. With previous OHF appropriations (FY10 & FY11) we have permanently protected through fee title 820 acres along the Minnesota River Valley, associated watersheds, and tributaries as WMA's and AMA's which are open to public use. These newly acquired properties from willing and supportive landowners have protected remnant native prairies, rock outcrops, provided nearly 2-3 miles

of river/stream shoreline protection, expanded existing public infrastructures, and increase the outdoor recreational system within the Green Corridor program area.

With the increase of these public infrastructures of WMA's and AMA's the Green Corridor Legacy Program has protected critical wildlife and aquatic habitats for fish, game and wildlife and has increased the opportunity for public enjoyment and use of these newly acquired outdoor recreational systems that are in alignment with many of the state's conservation plans previously mentioned. These new or expanded public outdoor recreational systems will provide greater public access to these natural resources and will help enhance an outdoor recreational economy for this region.

Citizens, landowners, stakeholders, state/federal agencies, and local units of government involvement and support will play a critical role in the Green Corridor Legacy Program continuing development and success.

Finally the Green Corridor Legacy Program Phase IV will continue its focus in the Prairie region and will use various state conservation plans to include the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan 2010 and will tailor activities to help achieve the stated strategic priorities and outcomes from these various plans.

### Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Milestone	Date completed
Property reviews & Appraisals	4-7 appraisals	November 2012
Purchase Agreements	4-7 agreements	February 2013
Closings & property transfer	4-7 fee title acquisitions 270 acres	June 2013
Restoration as needed	2-5 properties – 100 acres	Spring 2014

**Table B-2. Other Outcome Table**

Goal 1	Activity – P/R/E	Measure	Impact	Ecological Type
Goal 2				

Attachments (*on spreadsheet workbook – 3 separate tabs*):

- A. Budget
- B. Proposed Outcome Tables
- C. Parcel List

*No Map is needed for the accomplishment plan*

**Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet**

<b>Name of Proposal:</b>	Green Corridor Legacy Program Phase IV
<b>Legislative Citation:</b>	To Come
<b>Date:</b>	24-Oct-11

[Link HERE to definitions of the budget items below.](#)

**Total Amount of Request**      \$ 1,730,000 *From page 1 on the funding form.*

**Personnel**

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash		Total
				Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

**Budget and Cash Leverage** *(All your LSOHC Request Funds must be direct to and necessary for program outcomes.)*

*Please describe how you intend to spend the requested funds.*

Budget Item	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash		Total
		Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	
Personnel - <i>auto entered from above</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Contracts	\$ 128,200			\$ 128,200
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT <i>(breakout in table 7)</i>	\$ 1,586,600			\$ 1,586,600
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT <i>(breakout in table 7)</i>				\$ -
Easement Acquisition				\$ -
Easement Stewardship				\$ -
Travel (in-state)	\$ 1,200			\$ 1,200
Professional Services				\$ -
Direct Support Services				\$ -
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$ 14,000			\$ 14,000
Other				\$ -
Capital Equipment <i>(auto entered from below)</i>				\$ -
Other Equipment/Tools				\$ -
Supplies/Materials				\$ -
	\$ 1,730,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,730,000

**Capital Equipment** *(single items over \$10,000 - auto entered into table above)*

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
<b>Total</b>	-	-

## Attachment B. Output Tables

<b>Name of Proposal:</b>	Green Corridor Legacy Program Phase IV
<b>Legislative Citation:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	24-Oct-11

*Table 1 and Table 3 column totals should be the same AND Table 2 and Table 4 column totals should be the same*

*If your project has lakes or shoreline miles instead of land acres, convert miles to acres for Tables 1 and 3 using the following conversion:*

*Lakeshore = 6 acres per lakeshore mile / Stream & River Shore = 12 acres per linear mile, if both sides*

**Table 1. Acres by Resource Type**

Describe the scope of the project in acres (use conversion above if needed)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore		100			100
Protect Fee		270			270
Protect Easement					0
Protect Other					0
Enhance					0
<b>Total</b>	0	370	0	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)  
Total Acres (sum of Total row)

370  
370  
*These two cells should be the same figure.*

**Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type**

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore		\$ 60,000			\$ 60,000
Protect Fee		\$ 1,670,000			\$ 1,670,000
Protect Easement					\$ -
Protect Other					\$ -
Enhance					\$ -
<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ 1,730,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)  
Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 1,730,000  
\$ 1,730,000  
*These two cells should be the same figure.*

Check to make sure this amount is the same as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

**Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section**

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore				100		100
Protect Fee				270		270
Protect Easement						0
Protect Other						0
Enhance						0
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	370	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)  
Total Acres (sum of Total row)  
Total Acres from Table 1.

370  
370  
370  
*These three cells should be the same figure.*

**Attachment B. Output Tables**

**Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section**

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore				\$ 60,000		\$ 60,000
Protect Fee				\$ 1,670,000		\$ 1,670,000
Protect Easement						
Protect Other						\$ -
Enhance						\$ -
<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,730,000	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)      \$ 1,730,000 *These two cells should be the same figure.*  
 Total Dollars (sum of Total row)      \$ 1,730,000  
 Check to make sure these amounts are the same as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

**Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles**

NA # miles of Lakes / Streams / Rivers Shoreline

**Table 6. Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in acres)**

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability		270			270
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					0
Permanent Easement <i>PILT Liability</i> <i>NO State</i>					0
	0	270	0	0	

**Table 7. Estimated Value of Land Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in dollars)**

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total	
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability		\$ 1,586,600			\$ 1,586,600	\$ 1,586,600
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					\$ -	\$ -
Permanent Easement <i>PILT Liability</i> <i>NO State</i>					\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ 1,586,600	\$ -	\$ -		

*FYI: should match total in budget table that is auto entered below*



### Attachment C. Parcel List

**Name of Proposal:** Green Corridor Legacy Program Phase IV  
**Legislative Citation:** To come  
**Date:** 24-Oct-11

County	Township (25-258)	Range (01-51)	Direction most parcels are 2 with the exception of some areas of Cook County which is 1	Section (01 thru 36)	TRDS	# of acres	Budgetary Estimate (includes administrative, restoration or other related costs and do not include matching money contributed or earned by the transaction)	Description	Activity PF=Protect Fee PE=Protect Easement PO=Protect Other R=Restore E=Enhance	If Easement, what is the easement cost as a % of the fee acquisition?	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)	
<b>Parcel Name</b>													
Cedar Rock WMA addition	Redwood	114	36	2	4	114360204	392	\$1,568,000	Native prairie & rock outcrops	PF	NA	Yes	Yes
Terri WMA	Brown	108	34	2	15	108340215	152	\$608,000	old gravel pit	PF	NA	Yes	Yes
OTTO Memorial WMA	Redwood	113	35	2	28	113350228	236	\$944,000	Expands existing WMA	PF	NA	No	Yes
Coal Mine WMA	Brown	109	35	2	7	109350207	147	\$588,000	degraded native prairie	PF	NA	No	Yes
Cold Spring WMA add.	Renville	113	36	2	1	113360201	80	\$320,000	native prairie & bluffland	PF	NA	No	Yes
Whispering Ridge AMA add	Renville	114	36	2	32	114360232	40	\$160,000	Native prairie & rock outcrops	PF	NA	No	Yes
Hilltop WMA (new)	Renville	112	34	2	3	112340203	104	\$416,000	native prairie, oak woods	PF	NA	Yes	Yes
Bashaw WMA add.	Renville	113	35	2	26	113350226	80	\$320,000	restorable wetlands	PF	NA	No	Yes
Pat's Pasture WMA add.	Brown	108	34	2	16	108340216	220	\$880,000	40 acres native prairie	PF	NA	No	Yes
Arnolds Lake WMA add.	Cottonwood	105	37	2	29	105370229	182	\$728,000	DesMoine River shoreline	PF	NA	No	Yes
St. Leo WMA complex	Cottonwood	106	36	2	10	106360210	22	\$88,000	Arnolds Lake shoreline	PF	NA	No	Yes
St. Leo WMA complex	Yellow Medicine	115	43	2	8	115430208	7	\$28,000	connecting tract to WMA	PF	NA	No	Yes
Beaver Creek WMA	Yellow Medicine	115	43	2	8	115430208	91	\$364,000	connecting tract to WMA	PF	NA	No	Yes
Devil's Run WMA	Murray	107	41	2	35	107410235	40	\$160,000	old Mud Lake headwater	PF	NA	No	Yes
Devil's Run WMA	Murray	106	39	2	6	106390206	150	\$600,000	wetland CRP expires 2012	PF	NA	No	Yes
Irruption WMA	Murray	107	39	2	32	107390232	75	\$300,000	DesMoine River, CRP expires 2013	PF	NA	No	Yes
<b>TOTALS</b>	Murray	106	39	2	20	106390220	80	\$320,000	DesMoine River,CRP expires 2012	PF	NA	No	Yes
							<b>2,018</b>	<b>\$8,072,000</b>					

Tracts maybe added or subtracted as opportunities arise or change. Any changes in Parcel list will be review with LSOHC.